

CALIFORNIA NURSERY COMPANY HISTORICAL PARK  
36501 Niles Boulevard  
Fremont  
Alameda County  
California

HALS CA-11  
CA-11

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

**HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY**  
**CALIFORNIA NURSERY COMPANY HISTORICAL PARK**

**HALS NO. CA-11**

Location: 136501 Niles Boulevard, Fremont, Alameda County, CA  
Lat: 37.58004 Long: -121.99062

Significance: The California Nursery Historical Park is significant because of its role in growing and popularizing the use of palms in California and for having provided all of the palms for the 1915 World Exposition. The nursery is associated with John Rock, known as the "*father*" of palm cultivation in California.

History: The California Nursery Company was founded in 1884 by John Rock and relocated to the Niles boulevard site in 1865. The nursery, which was the largest retail nursery west of the Rockies, grew and supplied ornamental plants for gardens and parks, and grapes, fruit and nut trees for California vineyards and orchards. Rock specialized in growing palms and was considered the "*father*" of palm cultivation in California.

The park is much like an arboretum with some trees likely dating to the 1880s. Species include: *Taxodium distichum*/bald cypress, *Araucaria bidwillii*/bunya bunya, *Glyptostrobus pensilis*/China cypress, *Brachychiton populneum*/forest kurrajong, *Howea forsteriana*/kentia palm, *Phoenix canariensis* x *rupicola*/Phoenix hybrid, *Butia capitata*/jelly palm, and many more rare and exotic species. The California Nursery Company supplied all the palms for the 1915 'Panama-Pacific International Exposition' in San Francisco. This event became known as the quintessential World Fair and palms were an important design feature. An adobe built in 1842 by Jose de Jesus Vallejo, first administrator of Mission San Jose, is located on the nursery grounds. It served as his "vaquero headquarters" and was part of the Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda. The adobe was renovated by the nursery in 1932 and used as a tea room and for entertaining guests and clients.

Sources: Roadside Arboretum, [www.fremontica.com/roadside/palms.htm](http://www.fremontica.com/roadside/palms.htm)

City of Fremont, [www.ci.fremont.ca.us/Visitng/Attractions/HistoricAttractions](http://www.ci.fremont.ca.us/Visitng/Attractions/HistoricAttractions)

Site visit by Chris Pattillo on January 1, 2009

Historian: Chris Pattillo, January 4, 2009  
PGAdesign  
444 17th Street  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 550-8855



Figure 1. Current view of the California Nursery with retail plants in the foreground and historic palms and other exotic specimen trees in the background (Chris Pattillo, January 1, 2009).



Figure 2. Vallejo's vaqueros adobe on the Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda (Chris Pattillo, January 1, 2009).